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# Ye Crown Coffee House





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Site of the Crown Coffee House and Fidelity Trust Co. Building in 1916



✓ **The**  
**Crown Coffee House**

*A Story of Old Boston*

BY

WALTER K. WATKINS ✓  
" "



*Published by*  
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BOSTON  
1917

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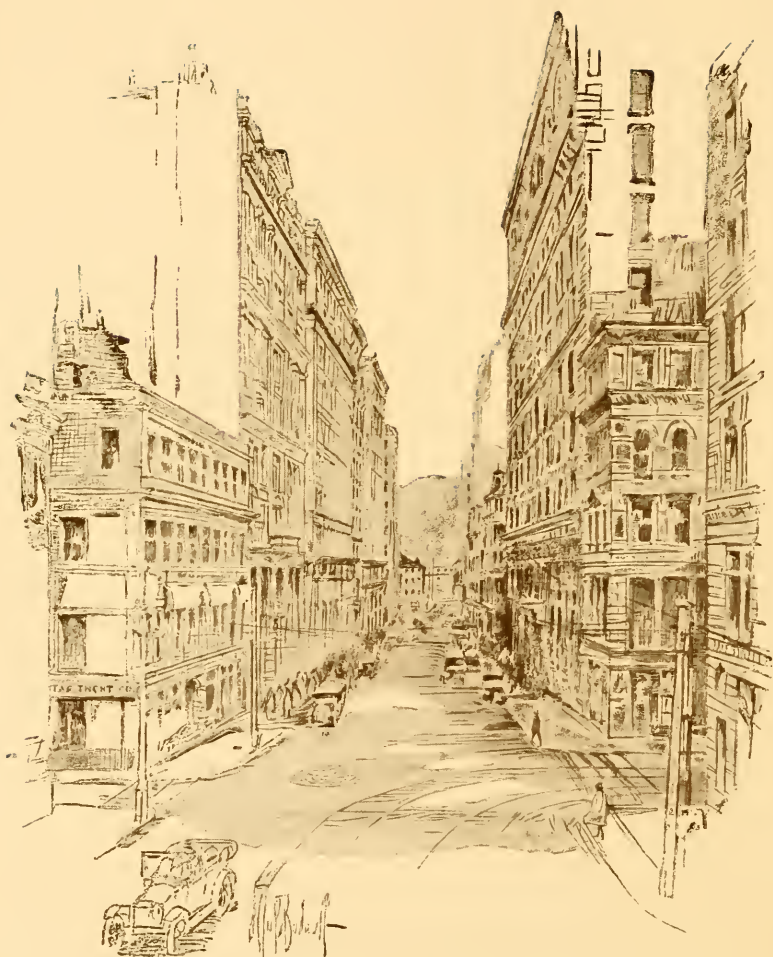
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## Foreword

*In presenting this history of one of Boston's old taverns we not only give to the reader its ancient history but also show how the locality developed, at an early day, from the mud flats of the water front to a business section and within the last quarter century has become the centre of a commercial district. This story of the site of the Fidelity Trust Company Building, once that of the Crown Coffee House, is from the manuscript history of "Old Boston Taverns" prepared by Mr. W. K. Watkins. Pictures and prints are from the collection of Henderson & Ross. Photographs by Paul J. Webber.*



State Street, with the Crown Coffee House Site  
in the middle background, 1916

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## The High Street from the Market Place

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# *Ye Crown Coffee House*



**I**N 1635 the High Street leading from the Market Place to the water, with its dozen of low thatched-roofed-houses was a great contrast to the tall office buildings of today's State Street. One of the latest ocean steamers would have filled its length, ending as it did, in the early days, at the waterside where Merchants Row now extends.

At the foot of the Townhouse Street as it was later called, when the townhouse was built on the site of the Old State House, was the Town's Way to the flats.

At low tide flats extended several hundred feet into the river or harbor. At an early day the first settlers along the waterfront were given leave to "wharf before" their properties into the harbor. Between the Town's Way before mentioned and the Town Dock (Dock Square) were half a dozen properties with this privilege. Next the Town's Way was the warehouse and wharf of Edward Tyng, a prominent merchant of the town.

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## Thomas Venner, the Cooper

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Among his buildings was a brew house, and next north of him was the wharf of Thomas Venner, cooper, who was kept busy on the beer barrels of his neighbor and the casks in which fish were shipped to England and the West Indies. Venner had come to Salem in 1638, but evidently his restless religious spirit, which later brought him notoriety, caused his removal to Boston in 1644. In 1648, he with other coopers formed a Coopers' guild, similar to the trade guilds in England, the earliest trade organization in Boston. His religious beliefs prevented his admittance to the Boston Church and in October, 1651, he sailed from Boston. The General Court said of him: "Venner (not to say whence he came to us) went out from us because he was not of us." In 1657, he had become leader of a band of fanatical religionists in London who styled themselves "Fifth Monarchy Men." They held the belief that four great kingdoms, Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian and Roman, after dominion over the world, had passed away, and they were to establish a fifth, the new kingdom of Christ, the Millenium.

After four years' disturbances, in January, 1661, Venner proclaimed the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus and proclaimed the killing of those who resisted his plans. With 500 followers he rushed through London's streets and killed innocent citizens. A force of volunteers and the city militia surrounded the remnant of Venner's forces and twenty leaders were tried

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## The Fifth Monarchy Riots

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and all but four sentenced to be drawn, hanged and quartered. Venner, with nineteen wounds, received in encounters, was drawn on a sledge from Newgate to Coleman Street, where his meeting house was located. There he was hanged and quartered and the head of the Boston cooper was set upon a pole on London bridge. Edward Tyng, his neighbor, was more of a conformer to the religion of the town and accumulated worldly goods in his trade and mercantile pursuits. By trade he was an upholster, and came from the parish of St. Michael's, Cornhill, London — Cornhill was the settlement in London of the Upholders or Fripperers, dealers in second-hand clothes. They were also dealers in second-hand skins and furs. By the middle of the 14th century they dealt in cushions, portable cupboards, curtains, feather beds, and carpets, and even furnishings for funerals. By the 17th century they had become furniture warehouse men. Besides this trade, Tyng had branched out and become one of the early merchants who were the pioneer exporters of fish, oil and furs and importers of wines and the manufactured goods of Europe. His warehouse and those of his neighbors, along the waterside, gave in later years to the street the name of Merchants Row. He returned to England in 1639 and was married to Frances Sears, of Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire. This place is near Dunstable in that county and the country place of Tyng, in New England, was given the





THOMAS VENNER.

*Preacher at the Conventicles of the Fifth Monarchy Men.  
& Seducer of Libertines. Captain of the seditious Anabaptists  
& Quakers in the City of London. Beheaded & Quartered 9 Jan: anno 1661.*

*From an Unique Print in the Collection of  
Alexander Monro Sutherland Esq: F.S.A.*

The Site of the Fidelity Trust Company's Building was  
off the end of Mr. Venner's Wharf in 1650



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## Edward Tyng, Upholster

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name of Dunstable, in which town he died in 1681.

Thirty years previous, in 1652, he had sold, "my wharfe in Boston against the end of the Great Street and interest in the flats before it down to low water-mark," to James Everell, shoemaker. The property was bounded south by the town's way down upon the flats and north by the wharf and line of Mr. Venner, east by the channel or low water-mark.

James Everell, though styled shoemaker, was not of the more humble standing of the present day shoemaker but rather that of the manufacturer of footwear on a large scale. He was often a selectman of the town and his land possessions were large and his house was near the town dock, a most important business section of the town.

Everell later disposed of the property to John Evered, alias Webb, who came to Boston from Marlborough, in Wiltshire, England. His house in Boston was on the site of the Old Corner Book Store. In 1650, he was at Chelmsford trafficking with the Indians, and his property there he named "Draycott upon Merrimack," after the village of Draycot Foliat, six miles north of Marlborough, England. In 1668, while on a fishing frolic in Boston, he was drowned off the Castle on Castle Island. While catching a whale the line became coiled about his waist, and the whale, suddenly come to life, drew him overboard.

In 1664 Evered sold his wharf to William



View of the Custom House and Vicinity of Fidelity Trust Company's Site in 1850

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## Whale Fishing in Boston Harbor

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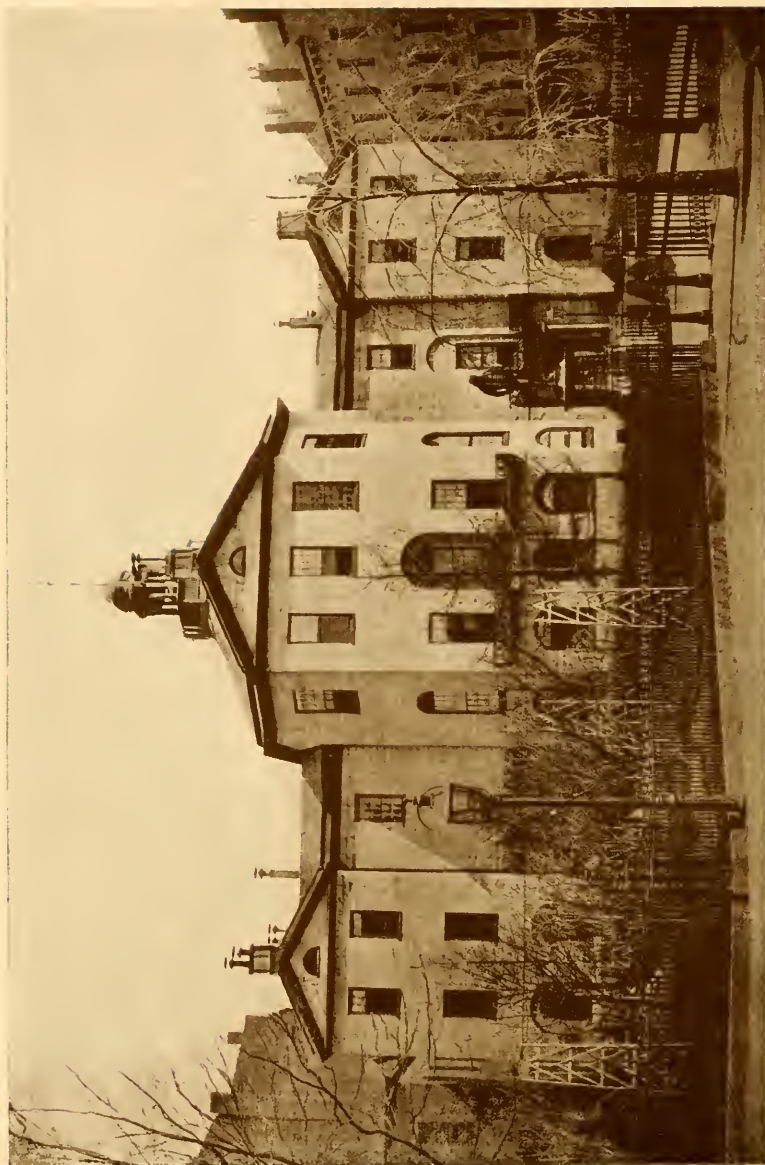
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Alford, a merchant, the property having a depth, from the front on the street to the rear, of 146 feet.

Alford came to Salem in 1634 from London, where he was a member of the Skinners' Company, its members dealing in skins and furs. He had favored the party in Boston headed by Ann Hutchinson and dwelt for a while at New Haven. He came to Boston, purchased the wharf and died here in 1677. One of his daughters, Mary, married a Peter Butler, said to have been of the Marquis of Ormond's family in Ireland. On his death she married Hezekiah Usher, a bookseller, who dwelt opposite the town house on the north side of the street. Usher died, and she married a third husband, Samuel Nowell, who was of great prominence in the colony. A preacher, though not a settled minister, Nowell was chaplain of the Massachusetts regiment in King Philip's War, acting with great personal bravery. A member of both branches of the General Court, he became Treasurer of the Colony just before the Andros troubles in 1685. He then went to England with Increase Mather as agent of the colony, and died in London in 1688.

His widow died in 1693, leaving the property, which had become known as Nowell's Wharf, to her children by her first husband, Peter Butler.

On September 10, 1673, the selectmen of the town drew up a plan for the erecting of a wall or wharf upon the flats before the town to extend from the Sconce or battery at the base of Fort



City Hall — 1840-1860. View in 1858



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## Boston's First Land Improvement

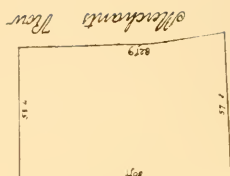
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Hill to Scarlett's Wharf, at the foot of Fleet Street, at the North End. This was to secure the town from the fireships of an enemy. This wall was to be 2,200 feet in length and to be a breastwork 14 or 15 feet high with guns mounted on the same. Some fifty shore owners agreed to perform their part in the plan and were given rights to erect wharves and warehouses in the enclosed space. William Alford's proportion in the project was one hundred feet, and the next quarter century was to witness the first great improvement in the growth of the town's area, and was done by the proprietors incorporated by an act of the General Court in 1681.

By this plan the wharf owners were entitled to build up to a line called "the circular line," the space between this line and the sea wall forming an inner harbor. In 1707, Mr. Henry Dering, a merchant of the town, proposed to the selectmen — "That it would be a benefit to this Town and tend to the encouragement of the Trade thereof to have a wharffe built from the Lower end of the Town House Street to run from thence to the Out-Wharves, or Low Water mark. And that the Town do grant their right in ye flatts unto such persons who shall undertake to be at the charge thereof." The result was that after agitation and action on the rights of the shore owners in building wharves within the sea wall, which had gradually gone to decay, the Boston Pier or Long Wharf was erected.

Historians and others, describing the project,



Plan of the Vicinity of the Crown Coffee House in the 18th Century

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## Boston Pier or Long Wharf

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state that the wharf was to run from the end of King Street to the Circular Line and to low water mark. The agreement of the proprietors, as given in the town records, was, "at our own cost and charge erect and build a wharf, with a sufficient Common Shore (at the Approbation of the Selectmen) at the end of King Street to the Circular Line as delineated by the Plan, *and that from thence we will Erect, build and maintaine a wharfe,*" etc. (13 Mch. 1709/10.)

This shows that the shore or flats were improved by preparing the bottom of King Street to connect, as a highway, with the new wharf, which was *to begin at the Circular Line*.

This agreement was entered into by Captain Oliver Noyes and five others, the original proprietors. Later others joined the project, among them was Jonathan Belcher, to whom was granted numbers one and two at the King Street end of the wharf. Belcher was the son of Andrew Belcher, an opulent merchant of Boston. After graduating at the age of seventeen from Harvard, in 1699, the son travelled abroad many years. He was a member of the Council for five years and agent in England for the Province. He became governor in 1730, and held the office for eleven years. In 1747, he was made governor of New Jersey, and held the office till his death in 1757. On his allotment on Long Wharf he built, after the fire of 1711, the wooden building to be known for over half a century as the Crown Coffee House.



Governor Belcher who built the Crown Coffee House



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## The Crown Coffee House Built

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The Crown seems to be one of the oldest of English signs. We read of it as early as 1467, when a certain Walter Walters, who kept the Crown Inn in Cheapside, made an innocent pun, saying he would make his son heir to the Crown, which so displeased his gracious majesty, King Edward IV., that he ordered the man to be put to death for high treason.

The Crown Inn at Oxford was kept by Davenant (Sir William Davenant's father). Shakespeare, in his frequent journeys between London and his native place, generally put up at this inn, and the malicious world said that young Davenant (the future Sir William) was somewhat nearer related to him than as a godson only. One day, when Shakespeare had just arrived, and the boy was sent for from school to see him, a master of one of the colleges, pretty well acquainted with the affairs of the family, asked the boy why he was going home in so much haste, who answered that he was going to see his godfather Shakespeare. "Fie, child," said the old gentleman, "why are you so superfluous? Have you not learnt yet that you should not use the name of God in vain?"

The coffee house must not be dismissed with a cursory mention. It might indeed at that time have been not improperly called a most important political institution. No Parliament had sat for years. The municipal council of the city had ceased to speak the sense of the citizens. Public meetings, harangues, resolutions, and the rest of

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## The Crown Inn in England

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the modern machinery of agitation had not yet come into fashion. Nothing resembling the modern newspaper existed. In such circumstances the coffee-houses were the chief organs through which the public opinion of the metropolis vented itself.

The first of these establishments had been set up in the time of the Commonwealth by a Turkey merchant, who had acquired among the Mohammedans a taste for their favorite beverage. The convenience of being able to make appointments in any part of the town, and of being able to pass evenings socially at a very small charge, was so great that the fashion spread fast. Every man of the upper or middle class went daily to his coffee-house to learn the news and to discuss it. Every coffee-house had one or more orators to whose eloquence the crowd listened with admiration, and who soon became what the journalists of our time have been called, a Fourth Estate of the realm. The court had long seen with uneasiness the growth of this new power in the state. An attempt had been made, during Danby's administration, to close the coffee-houses. But men of all parties missed their usual places of resort so much that there was a universal outcry. The government did not venture, in opposition to a feeling so strong and general, to enforce a regulation of which the legality might well be questioned. Since that time ten years had elapsed, and during those years the number and influence of the coffee-

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## The Crown Inn in England

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houses had been constantly increasing. Foreigners remarked that the coffee-house was that which especially distinguished London from all other cities; that the coffee-house was the Londoner's home, and that those who wished to find a gentleman commonly asked, not whether he lived in Fleet Street or Chancery Lane, but whether he frequented the Grecian or the Rainbow. Nobody was excluded from these places who laid down his penny at the bar. Yet every rank and profession and every shade of religious and political opinion had its own headquarters. There were houses near Saint James's Park where fops congregated, their heads and shoulders covered with black or flaxen wigs, not less ample than those which are now worn by the Chancellor and by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The wig came from Paris; and so did the rest of the fine gentleman's ornaments, his embroidered coat, his fringed gloves, and the tassel which upheld his pantaloons. The conversation was in that dialect which, long after it had ceased to be spoken in fashionable circles, continued, in the mouth of Lord Foppington, to excite the mirth of theatres. The atmosphere was like that of a perfumer's shop. Tobacco in any other form than that of richly scented snuff was held in abomination. If any clown, ignorant of the usages of the house, called for a pipe, the sneers of the whole assembly and the short answers of the waiters soon convinced him that he had better go somewhere else. Nor, indeed,



Boston Pier or Long Wharf in 1723, from the View published by the Landlord  
of the Crown Coffee House

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## The Crown Inn in England

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would he have had far to go. For, in general, the coffee-rooms reeked with tobacco like a guard-room; and strangers sometimes expressed their surprise that so many people should leave their own fireside to sit in the midst of eternal fog and stench. Nowhere was the smoking more constant than at Will's. That celebrated house, situated between Covent Garden and Bow Street, was sacred to polite letters. There the talk was about poetical justice and the unities of place and time. There was a faction for Perrault and the moderns, a faction for Boileau and the ancients. One group debated whether *Paradise Lost* ought not to have been in rhyme. To another an envious poetaster demonstrated that *Venice Preserved* ought to have been hooted from the stage. Under no roof was a greater variety of figures to be seen. There were earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands; pert Templars, sheepish lads from the universities, translators and index-makers in ragged coats of frieze.

The great press was to get near the chair where John Dryden sat. In winter that chair was always in the warmest nook by the fire; in summer it stood in the balcony. To bow to the Laureate, and to hear his opinion of Racine's last tragedy or of Bossu's treatise on epic poetry, was esteemed a privilege. A pinch from his snuffbox was an honor sufficient to turn the head of a young enthusiast. There were coffee-houses where the first medical men might be consulted.



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## The Crown Inn in England

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Doctor John Radcliffe, who, in the year 1685, rose to the largest practice in London, came daily, at the hour when the Exchange was full, from his house in Bow Street, then a fashionable part of the capital, to Garraway's, and was to be found, surrounded by surgeons and apothecaries, at a particular table. There were Puritan coffee-houses where no oath was heard, and where lank-haired men discussed election and reprobation through their noses; Jew coffee-houses, where dark-eyed money-changers from Venice and from Amsterdam greeted each other; and Popish coffee-houses where, as good Protestants believed, Jesuits planned, over their cups, another great fire, and cast silver bullets to shoot the King.

On the site occupied by the present Bank of England there used to stand four taverns; one of them bore the sign of the Crown, and was certainly in a good line of business, for, according to Sir John Hawkins, it was not unusual in those toping days to draw a butt (120 gallons) in half-pints in the course of a single morning.

About the same period there was another Crown Tavern in Duck Lane, West Smithfield. One of the rooms in that house was decorated by Isaac Fuller (ob. 1672), with pictures of the Muses, Pallas, Mars, Ajax, Ulysses, etc. Ned Ward praises them highly in his "London Spy." "The dead figures appeared with such lively majesty that they begot reverence in the spectators towards the awful shadows." Such

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### Thomas Selby, Periwigmaker

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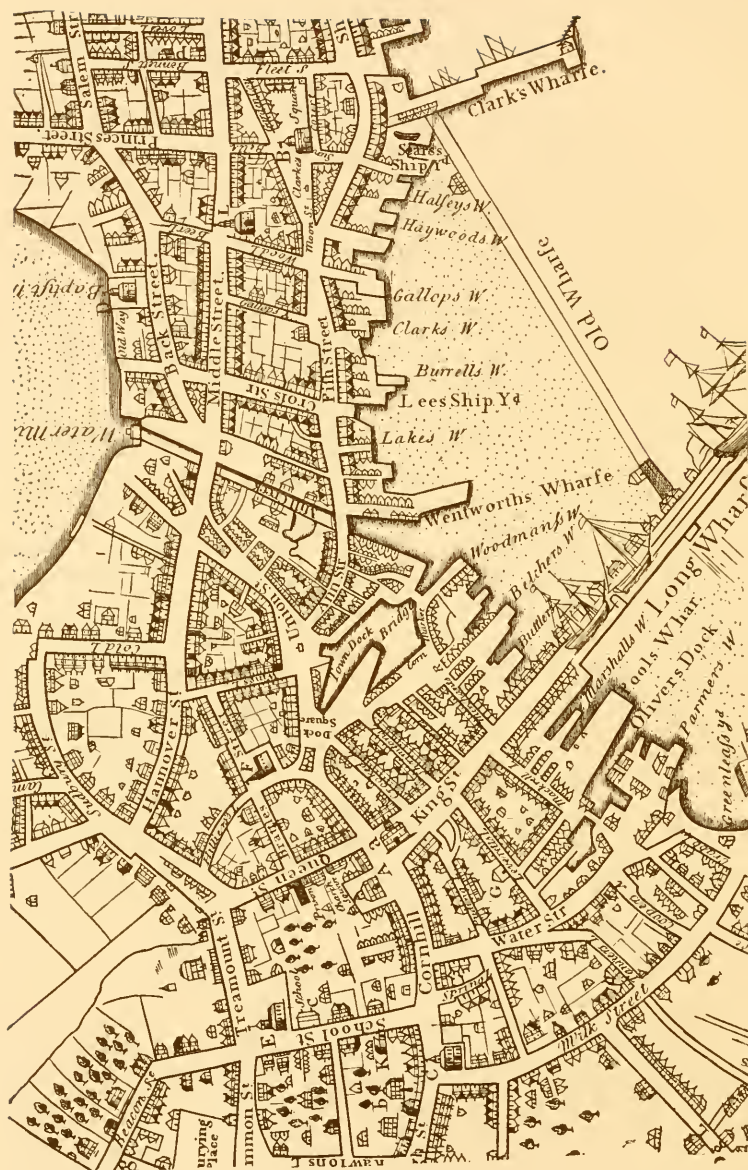
painted rooms in taverns were not uncommon at that period.

The first landlord of the Crown was Thomas Selby, who was admitted an inhabitant of the town February 20, 1709-10, Jonathan Belcher being his security. By occupation Selby was a periwigmaker, but with it combined his duties as host of the Crown, where he was licensed to sell strong drink as an inn holder. The Coffee House was not alone a place of refreshment, but was also the place for vendue or auction sales of all sorts.

“Lately taken from the Crown Coffee House in Boston a good Beaver Hatt, never dress’d, with a hole burnt in the brim about the bigness of a pea. Whoever brings the same to Mr. Selby at the said Coffee House shall receive 10s. reward.”

“To be sold by Thomas Selby at the Crown Coffee House, All sorts of good wines from the pipe to the pint on reasonable terms.”

“At 5 o’clock at publick vendue at the Crown Coffee House, Long Wharf, a Collection of Choice and Curious Books of Divinity, History, Poetry, Voyages and Travels. N. B. To be sold at the same time and place a Collection of Curious Pamphlets, Plays and Maps.” This was not, however, his only connection with literary products. In the New England Courant (Franklin’s paper) from 17 July to 28 August, 1725, there was advertised “A new and correct prospect of the town . . . curiously engraved.”



Plan of Boston's Business Section in 1722



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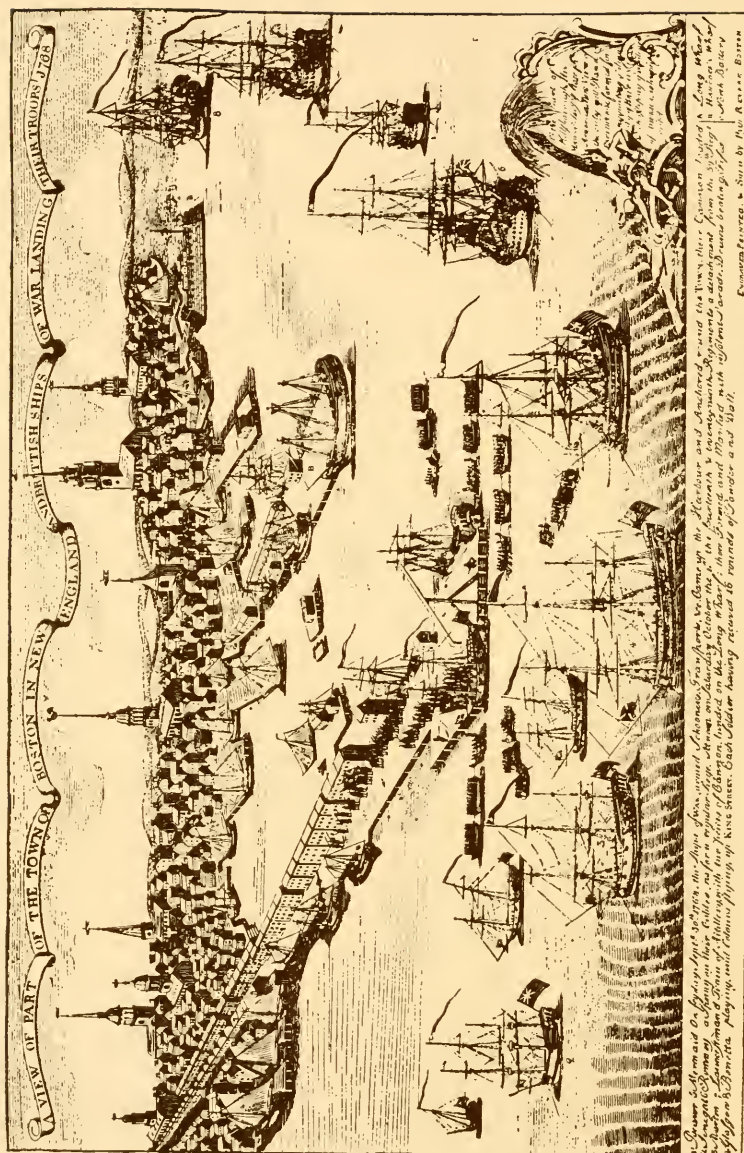
## Selby's View of Boston

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The title of the view was "A South East View of ye Great Town of Boston in New England in America," and was dedicated to Governor Samuel Shute by Thos. Selby and William Price. In the view are fifty references to places of note or interest in the town. A list of them is given in the key below the view. Number 25 is noted as "Thomas Selby's Coffee House," and depicts a three-story building of the period at the head of Long Wharf.

Selby married Mehitable, daughter of James Bill of Boston and Pulling Point (Winthrop). In 1720, Selby and his wife mortgaged his holdings he had bought adjoining Mr. Jonathan Belcher's house and land called the Crown Coffee House to his mother-in-law and brother-in-law, Mehitable Bill and North Ingram. Selby died at the Crown Coffee House, 19 September, 1727, aged 54. As he was an active member of Kings Chapel and vestryman from 1722 to 1727, he was buried in a tomb in or near the chapel. At the time of his decease there was living with him William Burgis, the engraver of the view previously described, and also of "A South Prospect of ye Flourishing City of New York," done in 1717. Besides a prosperous trade and an interest of £659 from the estate of Selby, the widow had property in her own right. Burgis won this prize and married the widow, after a widowhood of one year, and petitioned to be a taverner at the Crown Coffee House, which was allowed in July, 1729.



Landing of British Troops on Long Wharf in 1768

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## Edward Lutwych, Taverner

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In the following July, 1730, he was disallowed and in his place Edward Lutwych was allowed to the "Crown Coffy House." In the following winter, after a series of lawsuits against him, Burgis is noted as being out of the Province. In 1736, his wife, Mehitable, petitions that her husband, having got what he could of her estate into his hands, about five years since, left her and has never returned into the Province again, and she prayed a divorce. After being deserted the widow had other hard luck, was arrested for selling liquor without a license and keeping a noisy and disorderly house. This was not, however, a blot on the reputation of the "Crown," as the widow had left its management and the landlord was then Edward Lutwych. Lutwych was of a prominent family of that name in Shropshire, England. A brother, Lawrence Lutwych, of Boston, had been a distiller of Radnor, South Wales, and had married Sarah, daughter of Deacon James Lindall of Salem. Edward married for a first wife in 1727 Thankful, widow of Joseph Parmenter. On her death he married Elizabeth, widow of David Craigie, formerly Elizabeth Taylor, one of the heirs of James Taylor, Treasurer of the Province, 1693-1714. This shows his social standing, and as a subscriber to the New England Chronology of the Rev. Thomas Prince he evidently had literary tastes. He was one of several Boston people who, in 1735, petitioned for land at what was later Gray, Maine. In 1740 he was a subscriber

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### Widow Ann Clements

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to the Massachusetts Land Bank. In 1731, Lutwych had leased land at Hopkinton, Mass., and about 1735 he left the Crown Coffee House and resided at Hopkinton till his death in 1745.

His successor at the Crown, in 1735, was the widow, Ann Clements, who had previously retailed strong drinks around the corner opposite the "Golden Ball" in Merchants Row. She was a daughter of Matthew and Susanna (Walker) Jones, and married, in 1714, Jeremiah Clements, felmonger or hatter. They had several children, and in 1726 she petitioned for a divorce, having been deserted, two years previous, by her husband, who was then at Marblehead, he being interested in other women and having assaulted her. At that time she was employed by Luke Vardy, the landlord of the Exchange Tavern. Her experience there fitted her to run the Crown, her husband having died in 1732. Soon after taking the Crown she married William Swords, mariner, and kept the tavern while he followed the sea for a living.

In 1741, Swords leased a shop near the Town Dock, and his wife evidently gave up the Crown for a year in 1742 and later returned. In 1750 she stated she had kept a tavern for twenty years and had kept the Crown Coffee House for the past ten years.

In 1742 Samuel Wethered kept the "Crown" for about a year; from there he removed to the "Rose and Crown" Tavern on the south-west corner of King (State) and Pudding Lane

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### Samuel Wethered, Innkeeper

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(Devonshire Street). In 1743 he kept the Bunch of Grapes on the corner of King Street and Mackerel Lane (Kilby Street), when "the antient loyal and hospitable Society of Callicoos" met there that year. He took part in the 1745 expedition to Louisburg, and after its capture kept a tavern there.

He served in the expedition of 1758 which went to Fort Craven and the Oneida Carrying Place, being the lieutenant of the Boston Company, under Captain Richard Atkins. In 1759 his widow, Sarah (Thornton) Wethered, petitioned the General Court to sell the liquors left in the house at his decease.

In 1749, Andrew, son of Governor Belcher, as his attorney, sold the Crown Coffee House to Richard Smith, innkeeper. Smith, in 1738, had kept the Greyhound Tavern, which stood on Washington Street, opposite Vernon Street, Roxbury. When purchased by Richard Smith, it was then still in the occupation of the widow Swords. The house, a double one, was 40 by 30, the frontage on the south was 40 feet on Long Wharf, making a corner with King Street on the west, the depth of the building being 30 feet.

In 1747, Robert Shillcock was cook on His Majesty's ship Launceston and his wife, Hannah, was living at Plymouth, Devon, England. The Launceston was a fifth-rate ship, of the British Navy, of 700 tons and a complement of about 250 men.

We find Shillcock in Boston in 1750, as in that





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### Robert Shillcock, His Majesty's Cook

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year he succeeded Mrs. Swords, and the next year purchased the Crown Tavern estate from Richard Smith, and the property was held by his family until its demolition during the Revolution. During that period it had several landlords and landladies. In 1726 Rebecca Coffin kept it. She was probably the widow of Gayer Coffin of Nantucket, who came to Boston and in 1733 married Rebecca Parker.

In 1766 it was kept by William Wheat. He was a son of Dr. Samuel Wheat of Newton, and grandson of Moses Wheat of Concord. He was born in 1741, and started life as a trader in Boston. His mother, Hannah (Hovey) Wheat, was the daughter of Joseph Hovey, who kept the Blue Anchor Tavern, Cambridge, near the Market Place (the northeast corner of Dunster and Mount Auburn Streets) from 1705 to 1709. Though he might have inherited a taste to serve the public as a landlord, Wheat did not attain a financial success, and after a year removed to a house of William Edes on Fish (North) Street. In 1767 Richard Bradford took the Crown. He married, in 1763, Rachael, daughter of Caleb and Rebecca (Lobdell) Loring. The tavern on Minot's T. Wharf was kept by Nicholas Lobdell in 1754. Mary Maverick applied to the keeper of the Crown in 1772, but was refused. She was the mother of Samuel Maverick, one of the Boston Massacre victims. In 1774, Thomas Waldo was licensed to retail at his shop on Long Wharf. Robert Shillcock, owner of the Crown, had two

*Sign of*  
**WILLIAM WILLIAMS**

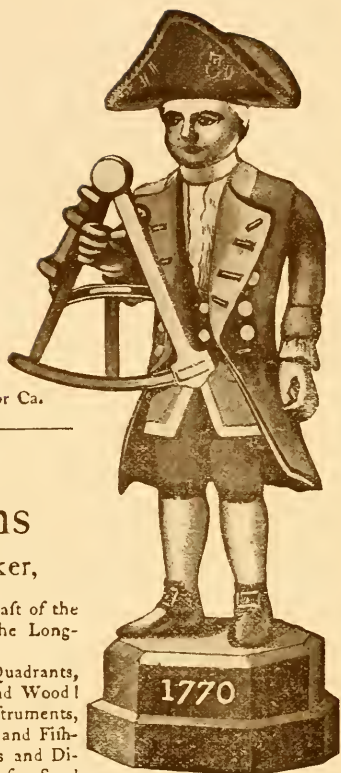
GIVEN  
 Lowest Prices, by Wholesale or Retail, for Cash.

Mathematical Instruments.  
**William Williams**  
 Mathematical Instrument Maker,

Has to sell at his Shop in King-Street, two Doors East of the Sign of Admiral Vernon, near the Head of the Long-Wharf, BOSTON.

A Large Assortment of Hadley's and Davis's Quadrants, hanging and standing Compasses, in Brass and Wood; Gauging and Surveying Instruments, Cases of Instruments, large and small Perspective Glasses, in Ivory, Wood and Fish-skin, plotting Scales and Protractors, Gunter Scales and Dividers, Surveyors Chains, Artificial Magnets with Cases, Sand Glasses from 2 Hours to  $\frac{1}{4}$  Minute, Instruments of a new Construction to measure Boards, Quarter Waggoners, Atkinson's Epitome, Wilson's ditto, Patton's Navigation, Seamen's Assistants, Callenders, Mariners Compasses rectified, Young Man's Companion, Journal Books, Ink-Powder, Quills & Paper, an Assortment of Brass Pocket Compasses with & without Cards, Box Rules, Slates and Pencils, Penknives, Jack knives, &c.

All Sorts of Mathematical Instruments are made and repaired by the above William Williams. Those who will favour him with their Custom, may depend upon being well used, and have their Work done with Fidelity and Dispatch.



'N-AWAY from his Master John Langdon, the 20  
 "Plant" Indented S

(*Boston Gazette*, March 12, 1770)



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### William Wheat, Trader

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daughters born in Boston; Mary in 1752 and Joyce in 1754. Joyce married, in 1773, William Williams, a mathematical instruments maker. After the evacuation in 1776 the selectmen licensed various persons to retail liquors. "Williams and Vincent to retail at his shop in King Street." This refers most probably to William Williams and George Vincent. The latter afterwards was licensed to sell at Scarlett's Wharf, where he died in 1782.

In 1782 the widow, Hannah Shillcock, died, having survived her husband eighteen years. An account of her husband's estate, of which she was administratrix, shows that the Crown Coffee House had disappeared before 17 March, 1783, and the land was then valued at £120. Its disappearance is accounted for by a fire which occurred on 20 September, 1780. At two in the afternoon a fire broke out on Long Wharf, destroying the warehouse of Pitts and Call, Eliot's tobacco store and several other buildings, including the Crown Coffee House. In October, 1787, there had been erected two new stores on the site of the Crown at a cost of £495. These were erected by William Williams and Benjamin Brown of Wells, Maine, who had half an interest in the property.

Benjamin Brown married, 28 March, 1796, Mary Frances Selby. He is said to have married Eunice Orne of Lynnfield in November, 1795, but the fact is that his intention to marry her was published on that date, and after his mar-



North End of Pemberton Square in 1875  
Site of Court House on the left



View of upper part of State Street in 1804

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## William Williams, Mathematical Instruments

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riage to Miss Selby, Miss Orne married, 23 December, 1796, Rev. Aaron Green of Malden.

The east half of the Crown Coffee House estate, Number 2 Long Wharf, owned by Benjamin Brown in 1798, was occupied by Joseph Baxter, junior. It was valued at the same figures and was of the same size as the west half. Baxter was in the boot and shoe business, the same occupation as the owner of the site 150 years previous, James Everell, the shoemaker. Baxter had previously been in partnership with Christopher Marshall at 5 Marlboro Street, present location Washington, between School and Winter Streets. Marshall was a captain in his brother, Col. Thomas Marshall's Regiment in the Revolution. Baxter was also a military man, but without the experiences of his partner. His services consisted of membership in the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. He was about forty years younger than his partner, Marshall, and died in Fayette, Maine, in 1828.

Besides the store 2 Long Wharf, Brown owned several other stores on the Wharf and an interest in the Island Wharf on the south side of Long Wharf. He went to Philadelphia from Wells, and died there suddenly in January, 1802. His widow, Mary Frances Brown, married Lewis Lecesne of New York. In later years she was a resident of Rio Janeiro. A daughter, Hannah Fisher Brown, married about 1810 to Francis Desire Mason of Belleville, N. J., received the Long Wharf property from her father just previous to his death.

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View looking down State Street in 1880



Interior of Store Room of Stearns & Crosby, Chatham Street, corner of Chatham Row. (Has not been changed since 1832)

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Benjamin Brown, of Wells, Me.

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It was on the death of Benjamin Brown in 1802 that the wooden stores were replaced by brick structures.

Williams occupied the store, Number One Long Wharf, for his trade as a mathematical instrument maker, and resided on Quaker Lane (Congress Street.) He died 15 January, 1792, at the age of forty-four years.

To be Sold.

By order of the Supreme Judicial Court at Publick Vendue. On Friday the 19th inst. (instead of the 5th as has been advertized). Store No. 1 on Long Wharf being the Estate of the late William Williams, deceased. (Columbian Centinel, 9 March, 1793.)

The purchaser was John Osborn. The property, valued at £1060, lawful money, was of wood, and had a frontage of 20 feet on Long Wharf, and ran back 30 feet to Spear's Wharf. In 1798 the store was taxed to John Osborn for \$2800.00.

John Osborn.

Imported in the Ships Minerva and Mary from London. Paints, Painters' Brushes, knives copal varnish, glaziers diamonds, etc. Sheet Clock and Window Glass all sizes at his store Number One Long Wharf and his store at the South End. (Columbian Centinel, 19 November, 1794.)



Crown Coffee House and Fidelity Trust Co. Site in 1872



State Street in 1835



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## John Osborn, Painter

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Osborn was a painter and dealer in paints and oils. His family was engaged in that business in Boston for nearly a century. His father's shop and house in 1789 was on Orange Street (Washington Street south of Essex) on the south corner of Nassau, now Common Street. His uncle Thomas, a painter, was at the North End, on Prince Street. The elder John died in 1792, and the son succeeded to the business, residing on Atkinson Street (Congress Street), then a new residential section of Fort Hill. A few years later he purchased and resided at number 18 Franklin Place (Franklin Street), opposite the Tontine Crescent, the large brick block which had caused the street to be a select neighborhood. A century ago he invested in lands at West Boston on Olive (Mt. Vernon) Street and on Cambridge Street, where he resided just before his death in 1819. Though only forty-eight years old, he left property valued at over \$100,000, a goodly estate a hundred years ago. John Osborn, junior, married, in 1792, Catherine Macaulay Barbour, who after his death resided at 26 Fayette Place (Tremont Street, between West and Boylston Streets).

The Osborn property on Cambridge Street was situated between Chambers and Lynde Streets, and some of the houses built on it by the Osborns survived in the 20th century. The property was left to three children, George Barbour Osborn, Catherine, who married Alexander Mactier of New York, and Lydia, who



View from Fidelity Trust Co. Site in 1916 looking west  
towards the Old State House

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## Hewins and Tisdale

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was the second wife of Philip Verplanck Hoffman, uncle of the late Dean Hoffman of New York. A daughter of Lydia (Osborn) Hoffman married the Vicomte Treilhard of Paris, and had daughters who married into the French nobility.

In 1824, George B. Osborn, son of John, sold the store, Number One Long Wharf, to Simon Kollock Hewins. Mr. Hewins was a native of Sharon. He married Caroline, daughter of Colonel Daniel Brown. Mr. Hewins was in the leather business, and in 1825 took as a partner Mace Tisdale. The firm of Hewins and Tisdale not only dealt in skins and hides, but also in "shoe notes," Mr. Tisdale, as a director in the New England Bank, having facilities for handling that kind of securities. In 1844 Hewins transferred to Tisdale his interest in the property including the adjoining store, 2 Long Wharf, which Hewins acquired in 1833 from Levi Bartlett.

Mr. Bartlett bought 2 Long Wharf in 1821 from Benjamin Brown's heirs, having occupied it previously as a tenant for several years. Mr. Bartlett was a dealer in West India Goods. For different years he had as partners Aaron Woodman and Eben T. Farrington, and occupied stores at other locations (7 South Market Street and 7 Long Wharf); but in 1849 he returned to 2 Long Wharf as Levi Bartlett & Co. In 1858 the location became 146 and 148 State Street. Later the firm became Farrington (Eben T.), Tozier (Andrew S.) and Hall (Elven D.)



Crown Coffee House Site and the Custom House in 1901  
Showing Site of Board of Trade Building

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## Occupants in the Last Century

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In 1885 Dudley Hall, grocer, occupied the store.

In 1835, Henry Hitchcock and Nathaniel C. Nash, grocers, were located at 2 Long Wharf, and in 1845 Isaac Nash, grocer, was to be found there. The building at the corner of Chatham Street, Number One Long Wharf, was occupied by its owners, Tisdale and Hewins, till 1844, when they removed to 82 Water Street. At that time Mr. Hewins resided on the corner of Boylston Street and Head Place, a locality at the present time wholly devoted to business houses. His partner, Mr. Tisdale, resided at 15 Rowe Street, now known as Chauncy Street. The cellar of 1 Long Wharf was occupied for many years by victuallers who supplied the wants of many laboring in the vicinity or visitors to the Custom House or Market. Among the occupants were Phineas Sawyer (1825), Constant Southworth and Mark Nutter (1835). In 1844 Stephen S. & E. W. Stone, druggists, succeeded Tisdale and Hewins as occupants. In 1854, Alfred B. Hall & Co. (William F. Matchett and Daniel Perkins, junior) removed from 57 Broad Street to 1 Long Wharf. They were in business as merchandise brokers, and, in 1865, F. N. Thatcher was the junior partner. Here also was located Hall, Caldwell & Co., of which Seth Caldwell, junior, was a resident of Philadelphia. A. B. Hall & Co. occupied the corner till 1902.

In 1903, William Bond & Son, Chronometers, removed to 148 State Street from the location



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### William Bond, Chronometers

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next door, where they had been for several years. Before that they were at 112 State, moving there from 97 Water Street. At the time of the Great Fire of 1872 they were at 17 Congress Street. Their business was located on this last street for 66 years. The firm dates back to 1793, when William Bond, watchmaker, was located at 32 Marlborough (Washington) Street.

In 1897, as an heir of the Tisdale estate, there was conveyed the buildings 144, 146 and 148 State Street to John Tisdale Bradlee, a son of John Rice Bradlee and Frances Ann Tisdale, the only child of Mace Tisdale. His mother, a sister of the wife of S. K. Hewins, was a daughter of Lieut. Col. Daniel Brown, a Boston printer.

It is interesting to note the rise of the values of real estate on State Street, in the vicinity of the Custom House, as evidenced in the assessed valuations of the sites 144, 146 and 148 State Street for the last century. The two wooden stores, 1 and 2 Long Wharf, valued at \$2,800 each in 1798, had by 1815 been replaced by two brick stores. 1 Long Wharf in 1815 was assessed for \$12,000; 2 Long Wharf was taxed for \$6,000.

In 1825 Number One, the corner, was assessed at \$16,000, Number two at \$11,600. In 1835 the figures had risen to \$18,000 and \$12,000, the result of the opening of Chatham Row in 1827. In 1845 the corner building \$28,000 and the next building \$18,000.

In 1855 both had increased in ten years in value \$7,000 to \$35,000 and \$25,000. At the end



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### Valuations for 100 Years

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of the Civil War in 1865, 1 Long Wharf had become 144 State Street, valued at \$55,000, and 2 Long Wharf was 146 and 148 State, valued at \$33,000. After the Great Fire of 1872, the values as shown in 1875 were \$65,000 and \$38,000.

In 1885 a depreciation is shown to \$40,000 for the corner, 144, and \$31,000 for numbers 146 and 148.

In ten years, in 1895, a slight rise appears to \$56,000 and \$44,000. Of this the valuations of the buildings were \$5,000 each.

In 1905 the property had doubled in value during the ten years. The valuation of \$100,000 for the two buildings in 1895 had become \$202,000 in 1905. The past ten years has added another \$100,000, and from its near location to the Custom House an increase may be expected for future decades.





New Fidelity Trust Company Building  
Erected on Site of Crown Coffee House



MR. JAMES G. FERGUSON  
President Fidelity Trust Company

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## THE FIDELITY TRUST CO.

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New times demand new men, new methods, new ideas, new institutions, and so as the old Crown Coffee House gave way to buildings adapted to the spirit of the time, the march of progress again demands that these, in turn, give way to a building commensurate with 20th century conditions. Accordingly there came into being the Fidelity Building, burrowing deep into the bowels of the earth, far deeper than was the old Crown Coffee House in height, with foundations to keep back the waters of the nearby harbor, upon which rested the piles of the Crown Coffee House, and lifting its head high into the air, eleven stories above the ground.

Fifty years ago, one would hardly hazard the guess that the old Crown Coffee House site would be adapted for a structure such as the Fidelity Building. State Street, at that point, hardly warranted an investment in an office building of over three quarters of a million dollars; in fact, within the last half decade, such an investment would have been considered the dream of the speculator rather than the judgment of men directing the affairs of an institution, consisting of the conservative element of metropolitan life; accordingly one might be led to ask, "Why now?" Then the answer.



FRANK F. McLEOD  
Treasurer Fidelity Trust Company



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Bank consolidations of the last two decades have gradually removed, from the great market section of Boston, financial institutions which were formerly in close personal touch with this class of their customers, who by the very nature of their daily vocations, were men who rubbed elbows with their neighbors. They bought their goods from the farmer direct, proverbially unaccustomed to conventional methods. They sold their wares to the every-day grocer, who, by dealing direct with the consumer, was obliged to bring himself close to his customers; thus, by the very nature of this relationship, the market man required close personal contact with all men, not excepting the banker, to whom he entrusted his funds for safe keeping.

Recognizing their own need, a number of these market men met together and decided to organize a banking institution which would more truly represent that group of business men of which they were a part. Thus, in the early part of 1913 was born an idea—an idea which culminated, on May 15, 1913, in the opening to the public of the Fidelity Trust Company.

The new bank engaged quarters in the Board of Trade building, formerly occupied by an institution now merged with another State Street Bank. The first president was Mr. Leonard H. Rhodes, a man known throughout the length and breadth of the City as one of Boston's most successful grocers; a self-made man and one who, for many years, had been on the closest and most intimate terms with the men of the market district. Feeling the strain of the added

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EDWARD C. DONNELLY  
Vice-President

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duties thus thrust upon him, Mr. Rhodes, at the end of the first year, asked to be relieved of his office.

Again, however, Destiny came to the rescue, when Mr. Rhodes consented to act as one of the vice-presidents. After much persuasion, the directors succeeded in securing a man to fill the vacancy thus created in the person of Mr. James G. Ferguson, one of two brothers who had built up the largest baking business in the East; a man who also had close personal relations with the group of men who had first conceived the idea of the institution, and thus, through the four years of its existence, the Fidelity Trust Co. has justified its being.

Problems have presented themselves, but they have been solved; for the Trust Company has proved itself a necessity to the community which it serves. In no way is this more apparent, perhaps, than in the steady growth of its deposits, which have been at the rate of one million and a half dollars per year.

When first organized, the capital of the Fidelity Trust Company was five hundred thousand dollars, with a surplus of one hundred thousand dollars. The strong, healthy growth of its business, however, soon indicated that a larger capital was necessary, and, two years ago, the stockholders voted to increase the capital to one million dollars, with two hundred thousand dollars surplus, and the additional capital was soon over-subscribed. So successful was the growth of the institution that once more it became necessary to increase the capital.



JAMES D. HENDERSON  
Vice-President

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and the figure was placed at two million, with \$400,000 surplus, and this issue was over-subscribed. Not even then, however, did those guiding its affairs dream that, within a short year, the growth of the bank would demand greatly enlarged quarters, but again were the ideas of its founders justified, and then, as new times demanded new conditions, it resulted in the erection of this beautiful new building of limestone and steel, designed by Mr. C. J. Warren, assisted by a group of men who have scoured the country for the latest and best ideas in office building construction. The building was erected by the J. J. Prindiville Co., who a short while ago completed the new armory on Commonwealth Avenue for the State, and who bring to their task experience gained in erecting many of the larger and more beautiful buildings in our Commonwealth.

The market district which the Fidelity Trust Company serves in a larger measure than any other part of the city, has maintained its general characteristics for a period of nearly two hundred years. The contour of the lower part of the city has been somewhat changed, reaching out more and more toward the harbor, and today, the water front which formerly extended up as far as the Custom House, is extended beyond the borders of Atlantic Avenue. Our institution now serves this district, being the nearest bank to the entire water front from Rowe's Wharf to the Charlestown Bridge. The area covered by this district is almost entirely business and the possibilities for the develop-

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EDWIN T. McKNIGHT  
Vice-President



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ment of banking interests in this territory is hardly to be measured by any precedent of the past. It is not too much to expect that within the next decade, the Fidelity Trust Company will serve this area in a larger degree than any other banking institution in the city.

The directors of the Fidelity Trust Company are justly proud of their bank and of its growth. They have sown and they have reaped, not tares or thorns; the seed has fallen upon fertile soil. The acorn which they have planted is growing into the mighty oak. Theirs is the just pride of accomplishment of making two blades of grass to grow where but one formerly grew. Thus cities, states and nations come into being.

JAMES D. HENDERSON.



LEONARD H. RHODES  
Vice-President



JAMES M. YORK  
Vice-President

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